

**FAILURE TO END THE KIVU CONFLICT: IS RWANDA'S SECURITY
AND STABILITY AT STAKE?**

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by

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

FAILURE TO END THE KIVU CONFLICT: IS RWANDA'S SECURITY AND STABILITY AT STAKE? by MAJ Patrick B. Sebudandi, 79 pages.

A long conflict has been going on in the Kivu region of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Today, in its later stages, the conflict has become an amalgamation of insurgencies by the former Rwanda Armed Forces (FAR) and genocidal forces under the umbrella of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), fighting to overthrow the Government of Rwanda, a multitude of Congolese militias, insurgents and renegade Congolese soldiers, and bandits fighting for varying causes. Rwanda, on the other side of the border, the country recovering from its horrible past of conflict and genocide, has always been wary of these negative forces a few miles from its Western Province, seeing it as a powder keg waiting to explode and upset the current development strategies taken. All stakeholders seem to be aware that this conflict is a big sore in the Great Lakes Region of Africa, but have failed to end it. This thesis will show that as long as this conflict in North and South Kivu Provinces of the DRC is not resolved, the political, military, security, and economic stability of Rwanda will be at risk. It will also recommend some possible solutions to ending this persistent conflict.

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ACRONYMS

ALIR	<i>Armée pour la Libération du Rwanda</i> [Army for the Liberation of Rwanda]
CNDP	<i>Congrès national pour la défense du peuple</i> [National Congress for the Defense of the People]
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FAR	<i>Forces armées rwandaises</i> [Armed Forces of Rwanda]
FARDC	<i>Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo</i> [Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo]
FDLR	<i>Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda</i> [Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda]
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTR	International Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda
MONUC	<i>Mission de l'organisation des Nations Unies au Congo</i> [United Nations Mission in Congo]
MONUSCO	<i>Mission de l'organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo</i> [United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Congo]
RPA	Rwandese Patriotic Front
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

The Great Lakes region of East and Central Africa has been a hotbed of conflict from the late 1950s until today as indigenous populations began to make claims for independence from colonial powers. The region is mainly comprised of six countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. It derives its name from the many lakes in the region: Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Kivu and Lakes Albert, Edward, and Kyoga. Within this volatile region of East and Central Africa and among these countries, armed conflict is not a strange occurrence since most of them have experienced more than their fair share of war. This thesis however, shall focus on the Kivu area of the DRC; a region that has possibly seen one of the harshest of persistent crises.

In Eastern DRC, lies the Kivu region which is comprised of two Democratic Republic of Congo provinces; namely, South Kivu and North Kivu. They are best known by their French nomenclature: Nord-Kivu and Sud-Kivu. A common border separates these two provinces from Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda; a fact whose importance is paramount when considering the dynamics of the conflict referred to in this thesis, as populations on both sides of these boundaries are almost homogenous.

The current turmoil may also have some traces of its roots in the period when the inter-lacustrine kingdoms were at the height of their formation in the 18th and 19th centuries especially under King Rwabugiri. Clan and royal family squabbles as well as various conquests characterized the wars of that era. But they were more of conquests

than ethnic wars that were meant to enlarge the kingdom. The conquests made Rwanda, to quote Jan Vansina in his book *Antecedents to Modern Rwandan: the Nyiginya Kingdom*, “the greatest and most complex in the Great Lakes region and one that differed from all others” (Vansina 2004, 3). Vansina chronicles more of this annexation of other lands by Cyirima Rujugira son of Kigeri Ndabarasa, to include the area of Central Rwanda to the shores of Lake Kivu (Vansina 2004, 11). The subsequent ruler Kigeri Rwabugiri made further conquests and by the time he passed in 1895, “the country included not merely the whole territory of present Republic of Rwanda but also some other districts that today form part of Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Vansina 2004, 11).

The advent of colonialism did little to settle the conflicts ignited by clan or ethnic divisions. Writers like Mahmood Mamdani have intimated that the colonials actually reinforced them through their “divide and rule” policy. In his book *When victims Become Killers*, he says:

In addition to a racial separation in civil law between natives and nonnatives, as under direct rule, indirect rule divided natives into separate groups and governed each through a different set of “customary laws.” Every ethnic group was now said to have its own separate set of “customary laws.” . . . The basis of group distinction under indirect rule was both *race* and *ethnicity*. (Mamdani 2002, 24)

Emphasis is put on the dividing aspect that overflows into modern Rwanda and spills further into the one in Kivu.

As interests shifted and local populations clamored for independence, the colonialists had to take sides via all means available in order to remain relevant through supporting the “oppressed side.” What came out of these political machinations were recurrent killings as local populations massacred one another in order to find favor with

the colonialist. In line with this, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja in his book *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila*, outlines the fact that “The rise of Hutu ethnic consciousness as a political force in Rwanda resulted from the emergence of a Hutu counter-elite in the midst of a divorce between the colonialists and their erstwhile Tutsi allies in the 1950s” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 219-220). He further says that: “It is reported that ‘Belgian authorities were very partial in favor of the Hutu, letting them burn Tutsi houses without intervening” (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 221). These events come to reinforce the notion that the colonial powers, by omission, fed fuel to the conflict that was to set the grounds for a major one that is raging in the Great Lakes region today.

The ‘pseudo-independence’ gained in 1962 was perceived as a mere chain reaction of inevitable events set in motion in 1959 during the “Hutu Revolution” and it may have created little or no opportunity for a “new” indigenous leadership behind which the people could rally as adherents of common visions. Like Nzongola-Ntalaja says, the colonial authorities rewarded Hutu violence by installing mostly Hutu administrators in the communes to replace Tutsi chiefs and administrators who had either been killed or fled (2002, 221). Thus, the natives were more of each other’s enemies than fellow countrymen. This kind of animosity engendered the backlashes experienced in Kivu and in other areas of this part of Africa even today.

Scholars like Thomas Turner, in his work, *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality*, have also highlighted that the conflict has been equally fueled by land wrangles among the locals and immigrant ethnic groups. Further reference to Turner indicates that land disputes were common among the Hunde, Hema and *Rwandophone* immigrant populations immediately after independence (Turner 2007, 116). The fertile area of

Masisi was very popular with cattle-rearing Kinyarwanda speaking groups while cultivators and wealthier locals like the Nandi preferred North Kivu. Filip Reyntjens, in the same vein, in his work *The Great African War*, emphasizes land issues being a subset of the factors that make the Kivu conflict what it is. He says: “In this relatively overpopulated part of Zaire [sic], conflicts over land set groups against each other in two ways . . . two types of land use, agriculture and stock breeding, entered into competition with each other” (Reyntjens 2009, 14). Both authors’ positions confirm the issue of land also contributing to the conflict in the Kivus.

The other outstanding matter in this conflict is that some of the belligerents are foreign, as Turner says: “The conflict in North Kivu differed, mainly in that, ‘the outsiders’ were partly but not entirely from a neighboring country (Turner 2007, 116-117). A large part of them however, are ex-Rwandan Armed Forces members of Habyarimana army that according to Reyntjens, regrouped and moved to the east [of the DR Congo], where they started operating as the Forces *Democratiques pour la Liberation du Rwanda* (FDLR) in 2000-2001 (Reyntjens 2009, 209). Their repatriation has been tackled but does not get resolved according to the wishes of the parties. It is here that they continue to cooperate with Mai Mai that allows them access to weapons and ammunition, Reyntjens further states.

In further elaboration of these alliances between militia, the economic and criminal aspects of the unions is highlighted other than the political. According to a UN report quoted by Reyntjens: “Although the FDLR and their ALIR predecessors, through intermarriage, farming and trade during their long stay in the DRC had become part of Congolese social reality, they also, like all other armed groups, committed atrocities

against civilians” (Reyntjens 2009, 210). They are better off exploiting the wealth which abounds in Kivu, than come face-to-face with the justice that awaits them in Rwanda or in Arusha at the UN International Crimes Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) for the crimes they committed during the Genocide and after.

In Rwanda, the post-colonial killings became worse with the massacres of the 1990s, culminating in the Genocide of 1994. When the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA) took power in Kigali, ending the hundred-day massacres, the whole defeated machinery [ex-Rwandese Armed Forces (FAR)] that committed the killings was relocated almost intact to the fertile plateau of Kivu. In the work referred to earlier by Nzongola-Ntalaja:

The defeated forces fled together with over a million people across the border into Congo. Protected by the French, the *genocidaires* were able to relocate their regime on Congolese soil, with the entire Rwandan state treasury and virtually all of the military arsenal at their disposal. All this allowed them to regroup for purposes of reconquering Rwanda and finishing off their genocidal enterprise. They then used the refugee camps in Kivu to raid Rwanda on regular basis and to organize the slaughter of Tutsi citizens and residents of the Congo. (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 224)

They re-trained and re-armed, with alleged support from external powers. Before a major invasion could take place, however, the RPA that had defeated them previously was able to pre-empt an all-out attack on Rwanda from 1996-1998 and by so doing repatriated over three million civilians previously held hostage as refugees.

This war in Rwanda coincided with the struggles to depose the late ruler of Zaire--Mobutu Sese Seko. The opposition was led by Laurent Desire Kabila of the *Alliance des Forces Democratiques pour la Liberation du Congo-Zaire* (ADFL).

Undoubtedly, war in Zaire also took its toll in the form of internally displaced persons, deaths of innocent victims of the conflict, and led to a humanitarian disaster and untold

suffering, including a high death toll from diseases, malnutrition and a “hotly debated subject” of massacres of civilians (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 225).

Because of unabated ethnic tensions in the region, various “liberation groups” were formed but kept disintegrating into splinter groups and local militias. These included groups like the Rally for Congolese Democracy better known under its French appellation: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD) which split into RCD-Goma and RCD-Kisangani because of differences among its adherents. The break-ups have been blamed on their backers’ interests according to Nzongola (2002, 228).

In addition, the Congolese government fighting renegade and dissident soldiers further fueled the conflicts. According to Severine Autesserre, in her work *The Trouble with Congo*, one of the dissident commanders, Laurent Nkunda formed the Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple—CNDP (National Congress for the Defense of the People) to protect the people with Rwandan ancestry (Autesserre 2010, 164). She goes on to state that the CNDP took control of large parts of Rutshuru and Masisi territories and frequently clashed with Rwandan Hutus and Mai Mai.

The Kivu area steadily metamorphosed into a fragile and turbulent crucible of conflict with enormous ramifications for the region, including large numbers of refugees. As Séverine Autesserre writes in the work *The Trouble with Congo*, quoting a UNHCR country operations profile: An estimated 2 million Congolese are internally displaced, and more than 360,000 linger as refugees in neighboring countries (Autesserre 2010, 5). Not only that but also “proxy wars” among other regional countries and a high level of mistrust among neighbors.

As the war Gerard Prunier famously referred to as “the African World War” (Prunier 2009a, 24) ravaged the hinterland, a great number of authors were mentioning in no similar terms what the conflicts meant for the area. State and non-state actors on all sides of the conflict held recourse to national and international mediators. The results were the Lusaka Accord of July 1999 and subsequent Pretoria and Sun City Agreements. But more activities were seen after the death of Laurent Desiré Kabila. His son Joseph Kabila, the current President of Congo opened the door for more dialogue than his late father. Reyntjens, in *The Great African War*, states: Diverse meetings, organized by all sorts of facilitators, were subsequently held in Abuja (7-8 December 2001), Brussels (14-17 January 2002), Blantyre (14 January 2002), and Geneva (4-8 February 2002). On 25 February 2002, the Dialogue was finally resumed in the South African resort of Sun City (Reyntjens 2009, 255-256).

Concerned states, having tried to settle the mayhem through war but ending in a stalemate, evoked rebuke and disdain from the international community which instituted a UN peacekeeping force—MONUC and a withdrawal of foreign forces by 2002 under UN Security Council Resolution 1279 of 30 November 1999. This, nevertheless, did not allay the fears of the local innocents or innocents of the neighboring states whose borders were constantly threatened by those terror machines. Indeed for the people living in Kivu and in the surrounding areas, the period from 1994 to date is almost like a lost decade. Massacres and rapes are habitual crimes with women and children the perpetual and primary victims.

The era of persistent conflict in the Kivu Regions has led to the inherent issue overlooked by local and international observers; namely, threats posed by the conflicting

parties toward Rwanda's security and stability. Not only does the conflict highlight the dangers of the conflict to Rwanda, it also highlights the dangers to the Congolese national establishment itself. This is that to which the ICG was alluding to when it stated that "as long as diplomatic attempts to finalize both a security and political settlement do not address the Kivus' web of conflicts, any deal at the national level will remain difficult to implement and make little difference for the people who suffer most" (ICG 2003, 3).

The disarming, demobilizing, repatriating and re-settling many of these warring factions to their home country Rwanda has been executed in principle as part of a peaceful solution, but has never been fully implemented in accordance with the UN Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, and Resettlement-DDRR charters. Indeed this was one of the primary objectives of the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC); later renamed the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) by the UN Security Council in its Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2010.

The imminent threat to Rwandan security and stability has always been the fear of being destabilized or sabotaged by the members of these warring factions; namely, former Rwandan government soldiers under Habyarimana and their infamous henchmen, the *Interahamwe*, who committed the multitude of atrocities during the period from 1990 to 1994. They are now reformed under many splinter groups; however, their center of gravity rests in the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda; better known under the French abbreviation FDLR.

Research Questions

During the period from 1994 to 2007, the raging conflict in the DRC provinces of North and South Kivu has claimed many innocent lives. People's livelihoods have been altered dramatically. Intervention by concerned states as well as willing neighbors has done little to assuage the suffering and neutralize the persistent threats. The UN has maintained the largest and most costly mission in the area under the MONUC charter (lately MONUSCO) with minimal results and no permanent solution in sight.

Given this instability, the study focuses on one primary question: if the instability continues, how does the Kivu Conflict affect Rwanda's security and stability? From the primary research question are derived secondary questions that must be answered as well. Key among them are:

1. What is the origin of the conflict and how has the conflict evolved?
2. Who are the main actors and what are their motives?
3. What are the inherent risks from the conflict and why is the conflict's unforeseeable end a problem to Rwanda?
4. How are some of the causes being addressed?
5. What are the viable options for ending the conflict?
6. What has been the role of the international community as well as Rwanda's neighbors (their agenda)?
7. How do the issues at stake affect Rwanda's economic, political, social (governance) situation in the short-term, mid-term, and long-term future?

Significance

The thesis shall labor to show that Rwanda's concerns in this conflict have always been a cause for controversy in this Great Lakes setting. The question has always arisen whether its voice has been heard or minimized by the quick desire to accuse her as an invader (Straus and Waldorf 2011, 141) with overt reference to "interference into Zairian/Congolese Politics." In the Great Lakes Region and within the greater international community, it is an open secret that, for quite a long time, Rwanda has been seen in this region as an aggressor instead of a victim (UN Draft Report 2009). The tendency to put Rwanda at the level of other belligerents however, is more or less aimed at denigrating Rwandan concerns and transforming them into accusations and blaming Rwanda as much for the problem. Unfortunately, this fallacy puts Rwanda in a position of being as guilty as the other parties involved which is as its proponents may want it to appear. Further, it simply wishes the problem away. The thesis shall labor to establish that Rwanda's security and stability concerns are not a cover for the "asserted aggression" but bona fide fears that the acquired peace may disintegrate with the onslaught of another attack by the bellicose elements in the Kivu region still bent on upsetting the status quo in Kigali.

This study also intends to highlight whether Rwanda's worries and threats are legitimate in terms of the operational variables: political, military, economic and social. Regardless of being put on the defensive by the condescending attitude of its aggressors, which include international actors who may have their own axe to grind with Rwanda, the stability of the Kivu area means quite a great deal for the stability of this small country, whose surface area is a paltry 26,340 square kilometers with the highest

population density in the region (396.7 per square kilometer). The significance of the study lies within this aspect.

Assumptions

The threats facing Rwanda are true in political, economic, and social terms. The fact that the conflict is raging only a few miles from the Rwandan borders, and is being carried out by an enemy who has taken advantage of a territory nobody seems to control, should be accepted as a real time threat in order to analyze its extent. This thesis bases its premise on the assumption that Rwanda is under constant threat from these negative forces and that the latter will not give up their intent for an armed return to “liberate” (their own term) Rwanda from the current regime. It also assumes that the DRC government and its security apparatus will have failed to gain control over its Eastern territory in order to establish normal border relations between DRC and Rwanda. Until this occurs, Rwandan national security remains threatened.

Limitations

The foremost limitation to this work is lack of time and resources to conduct interviews with the concerned people in the actual region where the conflict is raging. This would have been the time to interact with representative samples of the various actors, participants, and critical observers with a view to understanding more on this conflict. In addition, the study, conducted in a short period of less than eight months cannot exhaustively consider the entire array of variables at play in this region. It shall therefore limit itself to some of the literature already written on the conflict as its major

source of data and draw logical conclusions based on that, with possible recommendations for the way forward.

Delimitations

During the course of the research, the study shall limit itself to the conflict for the period immediately after the Rwandan Genocide from 1994 to-date. It is this period that has seen a greater increase in hostilities than in the preceding years. Its effects in real time are greater today than ever before. For that matter, this study will consider the threat in terms of the security and stability of Rwanda in the here-and-now rather than the past.



Figure 1. Map of South Kivu and North Kivu

Source: Human Rights Watch, *Soldiers Who Rape, Commanders Who Condone: Sexual Violence and Military Reform in the Democratic Republic of Congo* (July 2009), <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/drc0709webwcover.pdf> (accessed 20 June 2011).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This research was motivated by the need to inquire whether Rwanda's security and stability is threatened by the current conflict in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The researcher will endeavor to ascertain the possible causes of this long-lasting conflict, to identify its various actors and to spell out the motives for their fight (cause). All this will possibly lead to finding answers to the question: Does the conflict in the Kivu area affect Rwanda's security and stability? In the long run, the researcher will attempt to examine what contemporary authors have identified as the full spectrum of this conflict, its origins or setting in history, the numerous actors and to what its causes could be attributed.

This chapter will approach the topic in such a way as to move progressively from the historical perspective of the conflict, to establishing the multitude of actors and their related causes. A considerable effort shall be devoted to tracing the conflict through four crucial periods. First, it will look at the period up to the last days of late President Mobutu Sese Seko's reign (President of former Zaire which is now called the Democratic Republic of the Congo--DRC). Then, it will explore the period ranging from the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath and the uprising against Mobutu Sese Seko. Third, it will examine the second invasion of Kinshasa by forces originating from the Kivu region whose purpose was the toppling of President Laurent Desire Kabila. Finally, it will describe the present day insecurity in the region.

As the researcher was canvassing for literature related to this topic, he came across a "peculiar" form of classification of works that were most acceptable in

describing some of the authors whose works were relevant to the subject. Key among them are “foreigners” who have lived or worked in the region as political advisors, expatriates, historians or professors in the Great Lakes region’s academic institutions, as well as former members of the colonial establishment. Most of them have had political careers in the region’s French speaking countries and may have had ties to, or are indeed citizens of, the former colonial master--Belgium. This category of authors borrows from their experience and former roles in the region to put forward what they consider to be the face of the conflict.

The second category is made up of researchers who mostly sprang into action during the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and its subsequent spill-over into the Congo. Almost one third of the works widely published on this conflict are those written by these researchers or social scientists. This category is not limited to the region since others come from outside the African continent. Also related to these researchers are the authors who wrote exclusively about the Rwandan genocide, but also mentioned its links to the Kivu and to the wider Congo question as well.

The third category is the natives of the region who are citizens of the countries in question. These natives write wholeheartedly about their experiences and also write about the theories they have developed by having lived the events themselves. Unfortunately, there are very few natives who have written on the topic in larger part because so many were denied literary opportunities in this region over the past decade, vice elsewhere in Africa. Those former natives who did write something provide a wealth of background information that puts the conflict in context; especially those who have attempted to give a historical context to their writings.

The fourth category, and most prolific to-date, periodically produced journals, reports and papers published by international organizations. These include non-governmental organizations (NGO), intergovernmental agencies, and regional or international bodies like the UN and its agencies, or the AU and other regional establishments. These resources provide a near-real time presentation of events and their causes as they occur.

Most of the authors mentioned have systematically approached the conflict in a manner that emphasizes historical perspectives, causes and effects, and then remedies. This research will attempt to follow a similar path with an aim of highlighting the cause-effect phenomenon and its impact on the research question. The research will review each category of authors above vis-à-vis the origin, actors, effects and possible remedies while remaining true to the motive of the thesis.

Origins and Causes of the Conflict

This research has come across documentation indicating that the conflict in North and South Kivu, referred to in this work as “the conflict,” has its roots attributed to many causes. When referring to the conflict, Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, a native Congolese author and career diplomat, in his work *The Congo: From Leopold to Kabila, a People's History*, takes a historical perspective founded on the Belgian colonization of the country to the present day leadership of his country. He expresses himself in these strong terms: The major determinant of the present conflict and instability in the Great Lakes Region is the decay of the state and its instruments of rule in the Congo (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 214). He goes on to emphasize that with its size and resources, the Congo could not have been invaded by its smaller neighbors the way it was, if it was not ruled by the “Mafia-

type” organizations serving the selfish interests of Mobutu and his entourage, he continues to say.

The same view is shared by the International Crisis Group (ICG) as seen in its report *Escaping the Conflict Trap: Promoting Good Governance in the Congo*: “The Democratic Republic of the Congo’s strides toward peace could prove short-lived if the government and donors do not increase efforts to create a transparent and accountable government. State institutions such as parliament, courts, the army and the civil service remain weak and corrupt” (ICG 2006, i). The ICG report reinforces the belief that governance may actually be one of the causes of the conflict. Looking at both works, it is worth noting that the only minor difference is found in time but not in space; the ICG work is referring to the current situation whereas Nzongola’s work goes back to the Mobutu era and shows where the whole governance question arises. Further, with regard to governance, the ICG in its *Africa Report: Escaping the Conflict Trap: Promoting Good Governance in the Congo*: “These governance problems have an immediate impact on the humanitarian situation. Unpaid soldiers harass and intimidate civilians. Factions within the army and government continue to fight over mines and control of border crossings” (ICG 2006, i).

The second most important factor, according to Nzongola, is the Rwandan Genocide that happened in 1994. To him, the Congo could have used its capacity if it were ruled better, to stop the genocide. It had political influence over that country’s leader the late Juvenal Habyarimana. If it had failed to stop the genocide, at least it should have prevented the genocidal forces from using its territory to launch raids into Rwanda (2002, 215). This factor takes credibility from the fact that if the genocide

forces' war machine had not made eastern DRC its base, Rwanda would not have invaded its neighbor on any pretext.

Possibly by design other than by choice, most researchers have emphasized the effects of the conflict on the Democratic Republic of Congo. In the process, little effort has been directed to its impact on the security and stability of its smaller neighbor Rwanda. The gap created by this desire to bring out the Congo as the victim and ignore the repercussions for Rwanda's stability is what has motivated this study. Indeed, the roles of the Congo's neighbors have been highlighted by a large volume of works that have been published in the period immediately after the Rwandan Genocide of 1994 to the present.

Ethnicity and Land

The research will look at materials that highlight the conflict's more recent intense phase, that is, 1994 to-date. Many documents and outspoken commentators have capitalized on the ever-present ethnic strife as having had much to do with current conflict in the Kivu region of the DRC. Here, the research shall refer to what was said by Thomas Turner, who in his work, *The Congo Wars: Conflict Myth and Reality*, emphasizes that "the major issue was territory interpreted into land" (Turner 2007). Land is seen under the theme of quest for territory and the antecedent natural resources that come with it. Land in this region means a livelihood where some use it as cattle ranches while others cultivate the fields in order to produce crops.

With regard to the issue of ethnicity, the study examined what has been said in view of the ethnic constellation of this very volatile region; that there is a certain animosity among the local Congolese and the Kinyarwanda speaking Congolese. The

group that has received most attention is the Banyamulenge, an appellation attributed to residents of Mulenge hills. Thomas Turner in his publication entitled *The Congo Wars: Conflict, Myth and Reality* wrote:

Conflict, Myth and Reality wrote:

On 7 October 1996, the vice-governor of South Kivu province announced that all 'Banyamulenge' would have to leave the province within a week. On 25 October, so-called 'Banyamulenge' seized the town of Uvira, in the southern portion of South Kivu, near the border with Burundi. The Banyamulenge ('people of Mulenge', a small community of Tutsi pastoralists, speaking Kinyarwanda) had been in conflict with their neighbors in Uvira territory for several years, and the uprising seemed a direct consequence. (Turner 2007, 76)

What the work points out is that the friction is founded in ethnic and social subsistence orientation (pastoralists and cultivators). This also echoed in Autesserre's previously mentioned work, *The Trouble with the Congo*, the role of local identity and a case study of the tensions between the self-styled "indigenous" communities and Congolese with Rwandan ancestry (Autesserre 2010, 129). He further describes his work as being geared toward a two-fold task; to locate the local roots of the antagonisms that eventually caused large-scale violence during and after the wars of the 1990s, and to illuminate the interaction between . . . causes of violence." According to him, most of the micro-level rivalries over land, resources, and power involved only a few villages at both local and national levels (Autesserre 2010, 129). Still, the conflict between the Congolese of Rwandan ancestry and the indigenous communities of the Kivus, found other local actors joining national and regional politicians from the 1960s onwards. A case in point is brought to the fore by Filip Reyntjens, in his work earlier mentioned, *The Great African War*, when massacres of Hutu and Tutsi Banyarwanda occurred in Masisi, their houses burnt and their cows stolen. . . . Both parties (the indigenous and immigrants) accused each other. The Banyarwanda, accused the indigenous of chasing them while the

indigenous accused the Banyarwanda of wanting to claim the territory they allegedly considered to be part of “Ancient Rwanda” (Reyntjens 2009, 15). But the fact could be based in the common view that the two have had little or no concern for each other because of their varying interests and usage of land.

Gérard Prunier, in a work entitled *From Genocide to Continental War: The 'Congolese' Conflict and the Crisis of Contemporary Africa*, he surmises that the origin of the conflict cannot be seen in isolation of ethnicity or land issues in both North and South Kivu, considering the two categories (indigenous and settlers) have been part of the problem; especially making inclusive as well the refugees that have arrived since 1995 (Prunier 2009b, 48). Here, Prunier drives home the point that these refugees too are contributing factors in the conflict. Some ethnic groups indeed are on record for having been too xenophobic in accommodating any other new groups on “their” land since the times of Mobutu. So it goes without saying that the undercurrents of this attitude have been pervading ever since. Prunier will appear again in this study with his chronicling of the Congo wars in *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Prunier 2009b); further emphasizing the roles of various actors.

Proxy Battle Ground for Former Rwanda Armed Forces and Militias

On the other hand, William G. Thom, in his article “Congo-Zaire's 1996-97 Civil War in the Context of Evolving Patterns of Military Conflict in Africa in the Era of Independence,” identifies the former Rwandan Armed Forces known by their French

acronym ex-FAR, as a big part of the whole conflict; having crossed over the border into Goma, DRC with their complete war machine after the Rwandan Genocide. He says:

The ex-FAR surrendered their heavy weapons . . . to Zairian authorities, but were allowed to keep small arms and light infantry weapons. . . . Once more, the Hutu militants not only established separate military camps, but they also controlled the refugee camps. Hutu gunman distributed UN-provided food and other assistance. The militants wanted to run the camps and keep control over the Hutu refugees to achieve their own ends: building a base from which to launch an eventual counter-attack into Rwanda. At the same time, they began launching guerrilla raids into western Rwanda. (Thom 1999)

Thom further indicates that all of this was happening at a time when Zairian control over its Eastern Provinces was weak and local Zairian officials found lucrative business dealings with refugees in dire need of weapons.

There is also a hint that former President Mobutu of Zaire was pro-Hutu at that time during the conflict. The post-Genocide Rwandan regime was from the onset, wary of this huge force, numbering about 40,000 former soldiers and an additional 60,000 militias, all preparing to overrun Rwanda either by a direct conventional attack or through gradual infiltration. Though the Rwandan government expressed its worries to the international community, no concrete solution was rendered. The Rwandan defense apparatus thus took matters into its own hands by pre-empting the attacks and repatriating the over-three million refugees scattered throughout the Kivu Region; thus, possibly eliminating the Mobutu threat once and for all. With additional reference to Thom: “The outgrowth was a military campaign designed to break the militants' hold over the true refugees, return those refugees to Rwanda, destroy the ex-FAR and its allies, and--most shocking of all possibly eliminating the sympathetic Mobutu government in Kinshasa.” Unfortunately, part of this Rwandan solution elicited a larger problem as the research has found. The defeated forces in Zaire joined hands with other local militias and bandits,

making Eastern DRC a hotbed of armed conflicts rather than an oasis of peace as previously envisaged.

Natural Resources

In order for the belligerents to sustain combat power, they need a steady source of funds, near or located in the vicinity of their area of operation. The rich diamond and gold mines of the Congo provided this quite readily. As Stephen Jackson says in the article “Making a Killing: Criminality and Coping in the Kivu War Economy”: “That war has itself capitalized on the country’s vast mineral wealth, progressively becoming ‘economized,’ in that profits increasingly motivate violence, and violence increasingly makes profits possible for all belligerents” (Jackson 2002, 516).

The usual cyclic phenomenon in African conflicts during the 1990s soon takes over as “war became business.” Thus, the Kivu conflict had gone beyond the latency stage and had established itself into a fully-fledged civil war, much like in Sierra Leone and Liberia at that time, with a mélange of proxy forces fighting wars for their patron’s gains and at their benefactors’ beck and call. Bandits too exploited the conflict “for material gains.” With so many players in the African version of the “World War,” it is imperative to examine not only the key actors, but also their intended objectives as well.

Key Actors in the Conflict

Different authors have identified various actors and sponsors. These included forces of neighboring countries fighting proxy wars, to non-state actor-like militias and renegade soldiers breaking away from their own national armies (as in the Congo). Each actor justified its actions in the fray, typically along ethnic lineages common to their

cause. To peel the onion back further, it is worth taking a look back into the dynamics of conflicts in Africa since the arrival of the colonialists.

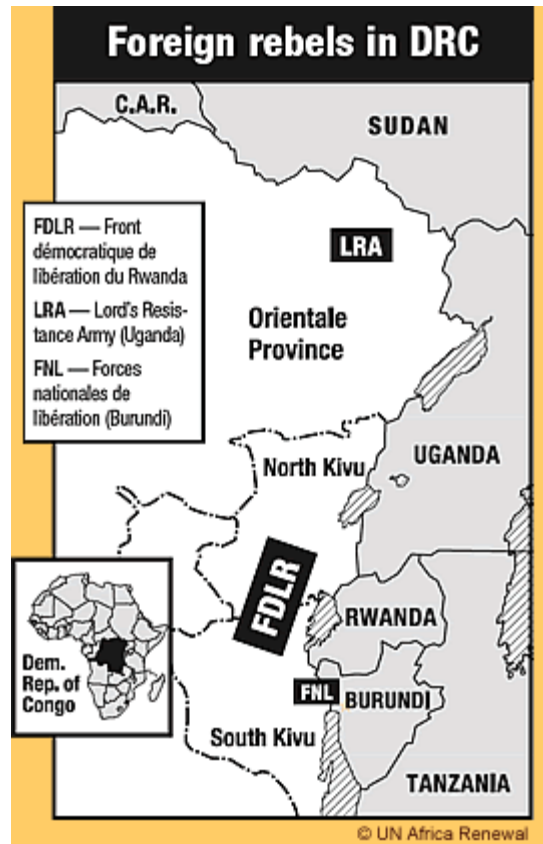


Figure 2. Foreign Rebels in the DRC

Source: Ernest Harsch, "Setting Foreign Fighters on the Road Home." *UN Africa Renewal* 23, no. 2, <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol23no2/232-foreign-fighters.html> (accessed 2 November 2011).

Ethnic Fiefdoms and "Warlordism"

Various wars in Africa have employed varying tactics trying to achieve different objectives. In addition, combatants have taken on varying forms as well, depending on the long term objectives. During the 1960s, there were liberation wars meant to garner for

independence. Colonial defenders employed guerilla tactics for fear of confronting the huge colonial war machines. When post-independence administrations failed to unite and act in nationalistic ways, they often splintered into opposing factions that engaged in brutal civil wars characterized by ethnic divisions (Burundi, Rwanda, Congo) and “warlordism.” As William Reno says in his book *Warlord Politics and African States*, warlords and their wars disrupt authority in other states. They ignore the significance of frontiers if they obstruct efforts to control markets (Reno 1999, 2). Some of the actors in the Kivu conflict fall into the warlord category.

In further reference to the issue of “warlordism,” Danielle Beswick, in a paper entitled “The challenge of warlordism to post-conflict state-building: The Case of Laurent Nkunda in Eastern Congo,” writes:

The complexity of Congo’s recent history clearly precludes a holistic account of state-building in this short article. Instead the focus is on the Kivu provinces in the east, bordering Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi. The article argues that the enduring influence of warlords in this region such as Laurent Nkunda, and their regional backers, demonstrates the shortcomings of international attempts at state-building. (Beswick 2009, 333)

What Beswick alludes to here is the presence of warlords (Laurent Nkunda) and their role in the Kivu conflict. For her the repercussions are failure for nation-building. As she further extrapolates on the outcomes, looking at the Kivus in a regional and political context, arguing that a history of marginalization by the state has facilitated the development of spaces beyond state control, which have come under influence of warlords, insurgent movements and other states in the region (Beswick 2009, 334).

“In the territories of Masisi and Walikale, in Nord-Kivu, different ethnic groups, clans, and families are fighting over competing claims. There are centuries-old antagonisms among native Congolese communities, such as the Hundes, the Nandis, and

the Nyangas. But the fiercest disputes oppose them to Congolese of Rwandan descent” (Thom 1999). Given Thom’s analysis, Kivu could only be, at best, a perpetual battlefield.

Ex-Forces Armées du Rwanda

As if this were not enough, the 1994 war and Genocide in Rwanda brought a huge influx of combatants into the Kivu region. Key among them were the ex-FAR and their cohorts the *Interahamwe* militia who are even reported to have been fighting alongside the Zairian Armed Forces (French abbreviation FAZ) during the final days of President Mobutu’s reign. Thom further states: “Tens of thousands of men from the genocidal army and the Hutu militias of the previous regime in Kigali came to constitute the core of Mobutu's defense force” (Thom 1999).

Mai Mai and Other Militias

A more vivid and candid mention of actors in this multifaceted conflict and its medley of belligerents is given by one Musifiky Mwanasali, in the work entitled *Peacebuilding in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. “As early as 1996, some armed groups, namely a large segment of the former Zairean troops and the Mai Mai rebels, joined the troops of Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo-Zaire (AFDL), and they are now integrated in the Congolese army” (Mwanasali 1998). Further Mwanasali writes that the forces at play:

Those who have refused to join the established authorities are still camped in rural areas and the remote parts of the provinces. These include the remaining contingent of the Mai-Mai rebels, which uses a small radio station to broadcast messages of rebellion against the Congolese authorities. There are also speculations about a military alliance, grouping the Mai-Mai, the *Interahamwe*, the former Rwandan armed forces, some Burundian rebel groups and several armed bands that operate in the Great Lakes region, against the governments of Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the DRC. (Mwanasali 1998)

Herein lies an amalgamate of ill-trained, but highly volatile enemies driven by an unquenched thirst for resources and the primordial need to protect their turf, while at the same time keeping the international community guessing as to what horror they will unleash on the innocent victims in their self-styled area of operation.

The issue of land and other resources in the region leads to another set of non-state actors in the conflict whom the study chooses to call “economic belligerents.” Thom again cites: “In most cases, economic tensions feed politically motivated hostilities, and vice versa. Access to resources means the ability to buy arms and reward troops, and thus to secure political power; political power, in turn, guarantees access to land and resources” (Thom 1999). What this means is that he who owns the land owns the minerals, and he who has the minerals has the funds to buy the arms to protect the land. So long as they have economic power, they will wield political power. This is how the conflict has been re-fueled and re-cycled over and over again. This is why all sorts of tactics (rape, massacres, use of child soldiers) have been used to lay claim to the land.

Forces Armees de la Republique Democratique
du Congo (FARDC) Renegade Officers

The study further traces another category of actors in the Kivu conflict, namely, “renegade or dissident” commanders with origins in North Kivu. This particular group grew as a result of ethnic friction between the majorities of various Congolese tribes versus the Kinyarwanda speaking minority. Kinyarwanda speaking officers found themselves between a rock and hard place. They were unrecognized by their Kinshasa superiors, and they experienced the trauma of having their relatives massacred in Kivu by the Hutu extremists and other bandits. Particular incidents include: Masunzu, Laurent

Nkunda, Jules Mutebutsi, whose uprisings happened in the North Kivu area. On all occasions they revolted against the official DRC Defense Forces (FARDC) establishment to form “their own” armies. What followed were actions taken by the FARDC to hunt them down while the international community labels them “Rwandan backed rebels”--a common theme during this era. To further elucidate, the study refers to “notes” in a journal of sorts by one Joseph Kyalangilwa which appeared in the English edition of the Swiss publication *Zeit-Fragen* in 2004 on incidents implicating Col Jules Mutebutsi:

The attackers continue to comb through this quarter until they reach the area where the teachers live who work at the Alfajiri College, run by Jesuits, where in addition to plundering and deliberate destruction, there are several cases of abuse and murder. By 9 a.m., it is clear that Colonel Jules Mutebutsi with his act of mutiny and the lack of discipline among his soldiers is responsible for these terrible events. (*Zeit-Fragen* 2004)

In no uncertain terms, the author continually refers to this group in this manner: “they (the dissident Congolese units and their Rwandan allies) benefit from this situation by plundering, raping, killing and destroying all they can in the housing areas of Nguba and Muhumba. And this continues throughout the night” (*Zeit-Fragen* 2004). Without mincing his words, Kyalangilwa lays the whole blame on Rwanda’s doorstep without giving a thought to the idea that these dissidents worked on their own and worse still, continue to pose a serious threat to the national security of Rwanda as well. By turning this area into an ungovernable similar to that of the Tribal Belt in Western Pakistan, what is left is a haven for outlaws who can find a favorable environment for insurgency and possible infiltration into Rwanda by the FDLR.

In the book *Remaking Rwanda, State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, Filip Reyntjens, refers to the dissidents in this manner: “Next to the FDLR, the other major threat to stability in the Kivus came from a number of Tutsi officers who,

during months following the signing of the DRC political accord in Sun City in early 2003, refused to accept their appointments in the new national army. Among them was General Laurent Nkunda” (Straus and Waldorf 2011).

In an effort to garner the international community’s support for ending the conflict, the UN issued Resolution 1279 of November 1999 establishing the UN Mission in Congo (MONUC) and UNSC Resolution 1804 demanding that all Rwandan armed groups operating in the DRC lay down their arms and cooperate under the auspices of the Nairobi Communiqué. The most recent one, UNSC Resolution 1925 of May 2010 extended the mandate of MONUC and transformed it into a peace support mission while changing its title to the UN Stabilization Mission in the Congo--MONUSCO (United Nations 2011).

Regional bodies have also sounded warnings on this conflict through various press releases and communiqués. Notable among them is the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) which was set up to discuss the conflicts in the region. The Secretariat of the ICGLR has publicly denounced “the renewed fighting in the Eastern part of the DRC in North Kivu Province between the National Congress for People’s Defense (CNDP) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) has aggravated the fragile situation in the Eastern Part of the Country” (Transcend 2011). The ICGLR requests that a concerted effort be made by all concerned actors in the conflict in order to bring about a peaceful end. Apart from these international initiatives, there have been more official statements issued in the form of interventions, agreements and other mandates by the concerned parties to reach a lasting

solution to the conflict dating back as early as 1999; two years since the most critical stage in the war.

During the early days of the conflict, Ambassador Peter Kasanda, former
Zambian Permanent Representative to the UN, transmitted a Ceasefire Agreement that
came to be known as the Lusaka Agreement to the UN Secretary General (UNSG) in
which Article II, subparagraph 4 highlights the inherent security concerns: “On the
coming into force of this Agreement the Parties commit themselves to immediately
address the security concerns of the DRC and her neighboring countries” (United Nations
1999, 1).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to ascertain whether the Kivu conflict affects Rwanda's security and stability. In an attempt to answer the question, the research consulted a variety of literature written on the same conflict emphasizing the origin and causes, the nature of the conflict as well as the different actors in the said conflict. The goal was to identify the threat of the conflict vis-à-vis the security and stability of Rwanda under the political, military, economic, and social aspects.

The research ventured to obtain information relevant to this conflict by consulting hands-on authors who have devoted a lot of their research on this conflict; some being natives of this region while others have lived in the Great Lakes region as knowledgeable expatriates. What the research intended to acquire, was a first-hand or primary source of information which would have otherwise come by way of interviews if the researcher had had enough time and resources to visit the area on which the study focused.

The key issues that are tied into a tight four part knot are: nationality, land, resources, and ethnicity, as seen through the literature consulted. These issues have always set the pace for the conflict and are quite strong in their influence over the direction the conflict takes. Mahmood Mamdani in his previously cited work wrote: "Conventional wisdom in Goma and Bukavu has it that Kivu Province in Eastern Congo is where losers in Rwanda traditionally end up, and it is from Kivu that they prepare to return to power in Rwanda" (Mamdani 2002, 234) and return indeed they have tried.

The issue of nationality (citizenship) and ethnicity are intricately intertwined in such a way so as to cause a permanent association of both. The two have for a long time

played into the hands of those wanting to marginalize others in the region. The result has always been that those pushed against the wall of ethnic “segregation” fight for what is their right; namely, their nationality. It does not however, end so well because of the non-ethnic Congolese being labeled as nationals of another country (in this case Rwanda). A case in point is illustrated in Koen Vlassenroot’s reference to the Banyamulenge (citizens of Mulenge) of eastern DRC in his article: “Citizenship, identity formation and conflict in South Kivu: The case of the Banyamulenge.” He writes: “The uncertain position of the Banyamulenge community is but one result of clashing notions of identity (identity based on ethnicity versus identity based on residence). This is why, in order to get a better understanding of the present DRC conflict, the issue of citizenship needs some specific attention” (Vlassenroot 2002, 501). The conflict has to be seen as one that will eventually create a larger problem if citizenship is not brought on the table in determining solutions for the conflict (and for future conflicts) so as to bring about greater stability in the region.

This cycle of disenfranchisement occurs when victims take up arms in order to defend “their rights”; hence a conflict exists. Like the old African proverb goes “that even when the tree grows up in the swamp it does not become a crocodile” (Lugbara Proverb), the victims have to more or less cut out their own “country” if they are ever going to survive. This in turn creates the fallacy whereby the occupying victims claim their autonomy, and the legitimate government (in this case the Rwandan government) believes that the victims require government supervision. And the cycle goes on and on. What this means is that unless a viable solution is reached, the conflict may go on for quite a long time and this may create, in the long run, the undoing of Rwanda’s security

since whoever takes up arms to quell the ethnically biased conflict thinks that the battles must end in Kigali “which is where it all started.”

The competition over “resources” brings its own set of problems in this conflict. As Raymond Gilpin and Richard Downie wrote in their work: *Conflict-Business Dynamics in the Democratic Republic of Congo*: “The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has enormous economic potential thanks to its rich mineral deposits and vast tracts of arable land. Historically, these resources have been exploited by predatory leaders and a host of sub-regional actors” (Gilpin and Downie 2009, 2). They further assert that “Cassiterite production is overseen by troops from the government Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) or the Hutu Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR), which control the majority of the mines” (Gilpin and Downie 2009, 2). The FDLR uses the proceeds from that these mines produce in order to purchase arms toward the war effort. The involvement of former Rwandan soldiers and militias in the local wars in the DRC, either as proxy forces for the Congolese Government, or as independent warlords conducting economically lucrative wars for their own enrichment, shall continue to figure in this thesis because of the enormity of their contribution to the threats facing Rwanda.

Given the aforementioned factors, the study shall endeavor to tie into the issues outlined in order to analyze their effects on the stability and security of Rwanda and then try to answer the primary and secondary questions of this research. Through deduction, the study will strongly suggest that there is much evidence which supports the notion that this conflict has political, military, economic and social repercussions for Rwanda’s own stability and security as envisaged in the works of the various writers. The majority of the

authors create an image of a Kivu whose situation is messed-up by the meddling and “aggressor Rwanda.” The study will attempt to show that in spite of this fact, Rwanda itself has everything to lose if the conflict goes on unabated.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Review of the Problem Statement

Primarily, this research was geared toward examining the question whether the conflict in the Kivu region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo affects the security and stability of Rwanda. The onus on the researcher was to identify in the previous chapters, facts which exhibited tendencies that the conflict that has gone on for the whole span of the post-genocide-Rwanda period (1994 to-date); indicating that the region remains a harbinger of insecurity and instability for the tiny neighbor in the east as shall be indicated by the established causes and actors addressed in the secondary questions. The secondary questions were focused on the following key issues: origin and causes of the conflict, the main actors, and inherent threats posed to Rwanda. The questions further inquire on the issues at stake regarding Rwanda's future security concerns. Finally, the questions examined the ways and means in which the causes of the conflict were being addressed.

The conflict has numerous causes. This study has identified five key issues that outweigh all others. They are: ethnic differences, the quest for land ownership, "warlordism" by DRC dissident military officers, the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide and the struggle for natural resources. It is worth noting that whereas these are strong reasons on their own, they do not exist as stand-alone causes. All of them seem to be linked to each other in their being catalysts for this conflict.

Ethnic Conflicts

The area literally has an epidemic history of ethnic conflicts left behind by the colonials (Mamdani 2002, 14) as well as by the subsequent regimes, from Mobutu Sese Seko to the sitting President Joseph Kabila who took over from his father Laurent Desiré Kabila. Specifically in this region of the Kivu, the crux of the division is based in the friction between the indigenous Congolese versus the immigrant Rwandan (Kinyarwanda speaking) populations (Autesserre 2010, 138) for whom there has been at times no welcome to the Congo (Zaire). This vibrant form of 'Rwandophobia' was born when the 1996-98 war broke-out. It was however re-fuelled by Laurent D. Kabila who presumably thought he would free himself of his Rwandophone allies after taking power in Kinshasa in 1997. The resultant upheavals, when the Rwandan-related uprising took place in Kinshasa, were felt as far as Kivu and the hatred that broke out has never subsided since then. The findings indicate that there are other tribal frictions in this region, but the anti-Rwandan xenophobia outplays any other. To elaborate on this, one needs to look at the Hema and Hunde further north in Ituri (Autesserre 2010, 114-115). They have also had their own form of conflict that culminated into massacres. Kristin Drake also talks about the same conflict in these words: The Ituri conflict in the northeast corner of the Democratic Republic of Congo provides an interesting example of how the environment can be both the impetus for conflict and a tool for sustenance. Long-standing ethnic disputes over land rights between the Hema and the Lendu has evolved into a multi-party, multi-nation conflict for control of the area's vast natural resources (Drake 2006).

A historical perspective of this region indicates that, as Adelman and Suhrke further state, the history of the Banyarwanda migration dates back to the sixteenth

century (2005, 52). The King of Rwanda annexed the areas of Busanza, Jomba, Rugari, and Gishari among others, where he planted Bivumu [sic] or “power trees” and appointed representatives. In addition, the Belgians who still favored the Rwandan occupation of Masisi (Eastern DR Congo), because of overpopulation (seen in terms of how many herds of cattle one owned), sent over 6,000 families to settle in those fertile lands in 1944. The opposition to this process created by the colonialists left the legacy of hatred and suspicion between the Hunde, Nande, and Nyanga who united against the Banyarwanda immigrants. An outstanding example of the ensuing frictions is seen during the “Kanyarwanda War” of 1964 (Adelman and Suhrke 2005, 57); fought between the Banyarwanda and Bahunde.

It is these grudges and traditional rivalries that still serve as a basis for hatred and continue to negatively brand ethnic identity in this region. That is what Denis Tull expressed in his work: *The reconfiguration of political order in Africa: a case study of North Kivu*, that “North Kivu’s contemporary society is both acutely politicized and ethnically polarized” (Tull 2005, 305). A huge “canyon” separates the “indigenous” Congolese ethnic groups whose interests are no longer geared at development, rather, at the destruction of the others—Rwandan émigrés, with unceasing calls to go back to Rwanda where they came from. The fact that this xenophobia is expressed so openly both in words and deeds is an indication of a latent threat to Rwanda in the foreseeable future.

Land

The quest for and ownership of land has long been a fault line in the current conflict and is directly linked to the foregone (ethnic divisions). According to the *Review of African Political Economy* (2005), the issue was born of the need by the customary

leadership to cling to the customary ownership rather than the public-good character of land. It was then slanted and interpreted to be used to marshal the natives into a fight against “foreigners” (read Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge) who were usurping the land.

The situation was worsened by the latter’s way of life: possession of large herds of cattle that needed large swathes of land to be transformed into fenced ranches for pasture as opposed to the locals who needed the land for food crop cultivation, often ending in battles where houses are burnt and other acts of aggression (Reyntjens 2009, 15).

It is in line with this kind of finding where one makes the observation that conflicts in North Kivu and elsewhere in the Congo are linked to land. This is further supported in the Human Rights Watch book entitled *Renewed Crisis in North Kivu* (HRW 2007, 67). Land in Congo signifies a great asset, and he who owns it wields quite a considerable amount of power. To that effect, Johan Pottier, in *Re-imagining Rwanda: conflict, survival and disinformation in the late Twentieth Century*, noted that:

Claims to land depended on whether the claimant was considered “autochthonous” or “foreign.” . . . The growth of this institutionalized confusion over land rights, combined with the 1981 withdrawal of citizenship for people with Rwandan origin, made it easy for the so-called “autochthones” to recoup, often by violent means, the ancestral lands they had lost or claimed to have lost. (Pottier 2002, 10)

That is why one could rightly say that land and ethnicity are intertwined in this conflict and has been used to fuel it incessantly. When the crisis heightened, the wealthy “expertly reframed the nature of the crisis—from class struggle to ethnic struggle—in order to buy the loyalty of the oppressed (Pottier 2002, 10). The product was a “deadly social layer of desperately poor, easy to manipulate young thugs” as Pottier continues to describe the situation (Pottier 2002, 10). And as a consequence, it is these youths that

were so gullible to taking up arms whenever the opportunity availed itself by way of various liberation movements, in order to regain their form of Congo; a Congo they thought free of foreigners and thereby adding wood to the fire in the conflict.

It is evident that these militant members of the population were twisting the issue of land into an ethnically biased fight, and directing their aggression toward foreigners (a veiled reference to citizens of Rwandan origin); all of which ties in tightly with the previous issue of ethnicity, thus compounding the threat to Rwandans in Congo and Rwanda as a neighboring state whose vulnerability seems endless if the conflict is not solved via amicable means.

Dissident Officers (Warlords)

It has been observed that in this volatile region, power and influence are huge assets. Both are interpreted into protection of one's turf as well as protecting one's own identity; more so for the Banyarwanda and Banyamulenge who were found to be constant targets of the other ethnic groups' attacks. The proliferation of various wars in the area transformed the setting into a stage for a multitude of liberation groups, several of them having contributed to the ousting of former Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko. United against a common enemy, they fostered some form of loose cooperation; however, after mission accomplishment, the age old hatreds cropped up again. In the new Congo (former Zaire), because of the Rwandophobia aspect, members of the liberation movements who were of Rwandan origin did not fit well in deployments out of their home region. During the sharing of power some may have felt that they had been excluded from more influential positions (Durch 2006, 288). Hence, they became dissidents and created their own deployments and formed their own armies with

stockpiles of ammunitions in South Kivu, becoming warlords in their own way as Danielle Beswick writes in the article: “The Challenge of Warlordism to Post-Conflict State-Building: The Case of Laurent Nkunda in Eastern Congo” (2009, 1). Those that have had notable influence and have caused more problems are: Colonel Jules Mutebutsi, General Laurent Nkunda, Colonel Bosco Ntaganda, and Colonel Masunzu. North and South Kivu have been their areas of operation. Unfortunately, every one of these has been linked to Rwanda by some observers and Congolese officials who prefer to put the blame of failure in governance onto somebody else except themselves. But the issue grows out of the power sharing clauses in post-conflict Congo. The original agreement was that the armed groups and former government forces were to be integrated (under a system known by its French title-*brassage*) into a national army the FARDC (Turner 2007, 130). Unfortunately, the process did not go as planned and some actors like General Nkunda did not trust the system; thus, leading him and others to keep their armies elsewhere, far from the arranged *brassage* centers.

Another issue is that some of these dissident officers have been indicted in the International Criminal Courts where they were accused of having committed atrocities and are being sought to answer for these crimes (Congoplanet n.d.). The only place of refuge remains their areas of operation where until lately no government had any control. It is logical then, that if the area is pacified and falls under a country’s national jurisdiction, they (the dissident officers) would be handed over to the International Court of Justice and this, obviously, is not welcomed news.

Their presence however is a constant source of worry for Rwandans, who have been accused of sponsoring them to fight the Hutu rebels (formerly of the FAR and their

Interahamwe cohorts). This connection is a source of friction between the Congolese and Rwandans who keep trading accusations against each other for supporting proxy wars aimed at dismantling each other's sovereignty. It is deemed as the slow burning fuse for any possible explosion of future war between the two countries.

Aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide

The Rwandan genocide also became another cataclysmic force in the conflict under research, since it projected across the Rwanda-Zaire (Congolese) border the payload of ethnic baggage previously explosive in Zaire (D.R. Congo). The conflict had just littered the Rwandan landscape with bodies of its victims in a gruesome hundred days that were covered in horrible silence despite being an open secret in the UN corridors (Cohen 2007, 3). The machinery which was the Rwandan Army and their Interahamwe militia then crossed over into Goma in the D.R. Congo and its surroundings where they continued to live under full battle order while the over 700,000 Rwandan Hutu civilians lived in the camps according to their local government settings in Rwanda, while being fed by the UNHCR (Reyntjens 2009, 16).

The armed machinery of the *Forces Armées du Rwanda* (FAR) together with the *Interahamwe* soon developed into a fully-fledged anti-Rwandan fighting group supported by Laurent Desiré Kabila's Congo after the first anti-Mobutu war. According to the Encyclopedia of Terrorism, they named themselves the *Armée pour la libération du Rwanda* (ALIR), French for Army for the liberation of Rwanda (Kushner 2003, 48) with a view to rallying all their efforts at some form of defense against the Rwandan government forces that were fighting them. The group later metamorphosed into FDLR (which was earlier on referred to in this work). After the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement

however, the support from the Congolese government seemed to be dwindling. It is during that period that the ALIR issued threats against US interests in Rwanda in 1996, (Kushner 2003, 48) earning themselves a place on the list of terrorists. Until 2001, the ALIR was still attacking Rwanda with concentration on military targets. The Rwandan government forces reported the group having split in half (ALIR I and ALIR II) due to its becoming weakened (Kushner 2003, 48). In Ted Dagne's work *Democratic Republic of Congo: Background and Current Developments*, the FDLR, according to the US State Department, was the "root cause of instability in Eastern Congo" (Dagne 2011, 6). Much of the insecurity posed to Rwanda by this group has been dealt with under the inherent threats.

Natural Resources

Earlier on in this work, reference was made to the conflict being associated with the abundant natural resources in the DR Congo. When one reads the document surrounding the exploitation of the DR Congo resources, the emphasis is put on minerals. Gilpin and Downie in their work: *Conflict-Business Dynamics in the Democratic Republic of Congo* stated that the DR Congo (DRC) has enormous economic potential thanks to its rich mineral deposits and vast tracts of arable land (Gilpin and Downie 2009). Instead of the Congolese population profiting from the resources however, the wealth has become a curse as Gilpin and Downie say in the said work:

About one-third of the world's known deposits of cobalt and nearly two-thirds of its coltan lie within the DRC's borders. The country is also extravagantly endowed with copper, cassiterite (tin ore), diamonds, and gold. Yet this abundance of riches has led to war and poverty instead of peace and prosperity. Since the 1980s, academics have explored the dynamics behind this resource curse, the paradox whereby nations rich in natural resources tend to be poorer and less stable than those that are comparatively less endowed." Historically, these

resources have been exploited by predatory leaders and a host of sub-regional actors. (Gilpin and Downie 2009)

The sad interpretation of the fact is that they are used to incense the conflict that has hurt the people the wealth should be fostering.

The Cassiterite production is overseen by troops from the government *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) or the Hutu *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR), which control the majority of the mines. This shows that some of the mentioned predators referred to in the article include the FDLR which has been using rape and massacres to frighten the inhabitants in order to vacate their lands so that unfettered mining can be conducted. The link to security and stability is that as long as the FDLR has a source of income, it shall have access to funds that will ultimately end up purchasing more weaponry to maintain their intentions against Rwanda as well as maintaining a stranglehold on the Eastern DRC region.

Main Actors in the conflict

The known actors in the Kivu conflict are a product of the problems that have been ailing Africa since the colonial times: ethnic hatred, poverty and poor governance. When one looks at the key protagonists, namely: the rebels of Nkunda, the Congolese Army (FARDC), the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR)-ex soldiers of the Rwanda's regular army of the former regime and ex-members of the Interahamwe and Mai Mai militias (Relief Web 2008), the image clearly comes out: murderous regime in Rwanda, ethnic wrangles in the Kivus, and political neglect and lawlessness as a result of poor governance in post-colonial Congo.

When elaborating on the Mai Mai, Peace Direct in their article “DR Congo: Key People and Parties,” they mention that:

Many were formed to resist the invasion of Rwandan forces and Rwandan-affiliated Congolese rebel groups. However, others have formed simply to exploit the war for their own means, such as by banditry, looting or cattle rustling. The two most powerful and well-organised Mai-Mai groups in the Kivus were led by Generals Padiri and Dunia. They were reported to have received aid from the DR Congo government and are widely viewed by other Mai-Mai groups as the leaders, though not the commanders, of the Kivu Mai-Mai. (Peace Direct n.d.)

They further mention other smaller Mai Mai groups like: the Mudundu 40/*Front de Résistance et de Défense du Kivu* (FRDKI) and *Mouvement de Lutte contre l’Agression au Zaïre/Forces Unies de Résistance Nationale contre l’Agression de la République Démocratique du Congo* (MLAZ/FURNAC) all united in the same causes mentioned above (Peace Direct n.d.). It is important to note their “objectives” characterized by anti-Rwanda sentiments, banditry, looting and pillaging. The FDLR and their Interahamwe cohorts are a product of the Genocide in Rwanda while the CNDP of Nkunda is described by the same work as “the founder and former leader of the CNDP, sympathetic to Congolese Tutsis and previously to the Tutsi-dominated government of Rwanda . . . fought alongside Kabila to successfully overthrow Mobutu” (Peace Direct n.d.).

Inherent Risks from the Conflict

Constant Fear of Invasion

When one closely examines what has been written about the conflict in Eastern DRC, three countries come to mind: the DRC itself, Rwanda, and Burundi. All three countries share common borders and have had their own problems, as well as insecurity spilling over, largely from the DRC; however, this research’s focus is on Rwanda and

shall remain so. The risks that the conflict poses fall into the security and stability aspects of national sovereignty, and the findings have been sifted within those specific confines.

Key among the issues that the study has found is that Rwanda lives under constant threat of invasion by the Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, FDLR--one of the aforementioned actors in the conflict, having been manifested in attacks in the previous years (1996-2001). As Phillip J. Cooper and Claudia Maria Vargas say in their work *Sustainable Development in Crisis Conditions: Challenges of War, Terrorism and Civil Disorder*, the World Bank and international aid agencies have demonstrated that the casualties of conflict continue long after the final engagements end, since the effects of conflict are persistent (Cooper and Vargas 2008, 280). Further evidence of the insecurity in the area, and the ever-imminent military invasion of Rwanda by the FDLR are documented by the International Crisis Group (ICG):

In November 2002 Kinshasa let 1100 escape from its Kamina Air Base. . . . They have regrouped under the name of *Forces Démocratiques de Liberation du Rwanda* (FDLR), an organization created three years before in Kinshasa, and constitute a military force of 15,000 to 20,000 in the Kivus that remains, despite the recent reduction of external support from Kinshasa, a genuine security concern for Rwanda. (ICG 2003, 3)

According to Idean Salehyan, in his work *Rebels Without Borders: Transnational Insurgencies in World Politics*, in 2006 President Kagame of Rwanda acknowledged that the FDLR were not receiving any assistance from the DRC. However, it was too early to declare the FDLR completely defunct (Salehyan 2009, 161). Salehyan continues to say that they have been weakened due to having their external assistance cut-off. They are no longer a major threat to the Rwandan government and have not mounted any attacks in the last couple of years (Salehyan 2009, 161). The rebels are reported to be fighting for their survival rather than any political objectives they once sought to achieve.

This assertion does not mesh with the recent claims that they are engaged in grenade attacks on the capital Kigali (11 April 2008), where over 37 individuals of an FDLR grenade smuggling racket in South-western Rwanda were arrested. The records indicate that, while living in Burundi, one Paul Ngirarwanda, a man in his 50s and a resident of Rusizi district, Southern Province of Rwanda, operated as a grenade smuggler on behalf of the FDLR, a rebel outfit based in the jungles of the DRC, mainly comprised of individuals who participated in the 1994 genocide.

Regarding these recent attacks, the *New Times of Rwanda* is quoted: Rwanda has been a victim of terrorism, where a spate of grenade attacks--coordinated by the FDLR and its fugitive allies--has left several innocent civilians injured (*The New Times* 2011). The threat still remains, and while most of the suspects have been arrested and are facing charges, the masterminds, are living freely in other countries, the case of the FDLR leadership under one Murwanashyaka, a reputed *génocidaire* who is living in Germany (Eichstaedt 2011, 104).

Arms Proliferation in the Region

Since the mid-1980s, when regional armies were fighting counterinsurgency wars, Uganda, Angola, Mozambique, Sudan, Zimbabwe, among others, enormous amounts of illegal weapons were amassed. International powers armed these conflicts by siding with national governments of the time (Muchai 2002, 187). Previous regimes in Rwanda and Congo have not been left out in this arms race. According to Muchai in the mentioned work, France and Zaire (then under Mobutu) armed Rwanda under President Habyalimana. As the conflict in Rwanda reached its height, machetes and small arms were distributed and used during the massacres that culminated in the Genocide of 1994.

Unfortunately, the trail did not stop there as it would be these same arms that would eventually cross the border into the Congo and be used again in the current conflict (Muchai 2002, 188).

To further compound the problem, as Human Rights Watch noted in their work entitled *Civilians Attacked in North Kivu*, Hutu civilians were issued weapons in Masisi and probably in Rutshuru by officials connected to the Governor (of North Kivu Province) Serufuli (HRW 2005, 7). All these issues remain as forces to contend with when it comes to security and stability of Rwanda as related to the proliferation of arms in the hinterland.

The arms multiplication is not limited to the ones from Rwanda since during the Cold War the Congolese troops “were supplied with some of the most sophisticated equipment ever seen in Africa” (Muchai 2002, 189). Accordingly, even after the Cold War, proliferation of arms continued unabated; Israel and Albania are mentioned as conduits while Eastern Europe (Russia, Romania and Slovakia) are named as suppliers.

The proliferation of arms is directly linked to the exploitation of resources. To use Muchai’s words: “trade and business interests rather than any desire to liberate the Congolese have played a major role in the current conflict in the Congo” (Muchai 2002, 191). The merchants of war sell their weapons to all sides of the conflict for profit. As long as the war goes on, arms and diamond dealers come out the winners. In the meantime, the arms continue multiplying into the wrong hands, most of which still harbor intent to sabotage their neighbors, including Rwanda.

Sabotage of Rwandan Development and Growth

In order to understand what this implies, one needs to make a quick flashback to Rwanda of 1994 during the Genocide and in the aftermath. The level of destruction in both human and infrastructure terms was enormous and the reconstruction was almost unthinkable. The defeated government and Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) looted all foreign currency reserves from the National Bank of Rwanda (BNR), worth about 17 billion francs (Prunier 1995, 321); government vehicles, crucial government documents as well as skilled personnel fleeing into the neighboring Congo (then Zaire) with them. Prunier referred to Rwanda of that time as a “land deeply traumatized.” The physical aspect of the country was tragic, with buildings destroyed, standing houses thoroughly looted and heaps of corpses still lying around. In some villages children would be seen playing with skulls as if they were balls (Prunier 1995, 327).

It is this same country of Rwanda that has evolved over the last 17 years into what An Ansoms describes in her article “Rwanda’s Post-Genocide Economic Reconstruction, The Mismatch between elite ambitions and rural realities.” The article as seen in its title talks about other problems related to developmental mismatches but the point is not lost on the reader that a major step in the direction of development and growth has been taken: “After a devastating 4-year civil-war and an apocalyptic genocide in 1994, Rwanda’s post-conflict reconstruction has certainly been impressive in many respects. The state was rebuilt at surprising speed and has provided service delivery in education, health, and infrastructure. Economic recovery has been exceptional” (Straus and Waldorf 2011, 241). However all this might be greatly threatened if the FDLR continues with their plan to return forcefully.

The FDLR who are part of the current conflict have always cast a shadow on the future of Rwanda's growth and development. Some authors seem to downplay the threat and minimize it but they still recognize the potent danger in the likelihood of sabotaging the economic growth path taken so far. A clear example is in Gérard Prunier's book, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Catastrophe*, where a statement to that effect is made: "As Richard Sezibera [then President Kagame's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region] said very clearly in December 2004, at the end of the 'Rwandese crisis' in the east, the problem of the FDLR lies in its capacity to hinder Rwanda's economic effort" (Prunier 2009a, 322). This does not rule out the fact that at any date in the future, an energized and fully-fledged FDLR could act to overrun Rwanda and set into motion their regime change agenda they harbor.

Survivors of the Genocide in Danger

There is a group of delicate members of the Rwandan population directly affected by FDLR-linked insecurity; namely, survivors of the 1994 Genocide. Some of them have been involved in the GACACA indigenous courts that have been trying the backlogs of genocide cases. The National Services of Gacaca Jurisdictions in Rwanda says: "Genocide-related trials started on 10 March 2005 in Gacaca Courts. Only then concerned were Gacaca Courts of the pilot phase, including those of the 12 Sectors which had started collecting data from 19 June 2002 and 106 others which started the same exercise as of 25 November 2002" (National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions n.d.). Survivors have been killed because of their testimonies and the FDLR as actors in the conflict in the Kivu have been implicated. There are incidences in the past where in the

north-western region of Rwanda, survivors have been killed by FDLR infiltrators. In a statement by the Rwandan Minister of Justice (*The New Times* 2011):

Following the 1994 Rwanda Genocide, trans-boundary genocidal acts constitute another major threat to the peace, stability and economic development across the continent. Between August and September 1997, insurgents from DRC massacred Genocide survivors in the northwestern region of Rwanda. The massive infiltrations of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe militias resulted into the destabilization of the northwestern part of the country. Selective massacres continued to target Tutsis in the buses and schools and Hutus who refused to cooperate with the Genociders. (*New Times* of Rwanda)

What the Minister says summarized the situation at that time and hints on the overarching objectives of the FDLR; namely, to kill the survivors and to obstruct the evidence that could be used in the traditional courts against the genocide perpetrators. In addition, this would make it hard for the sitting government to govern because of the survivors' deaths and the likely negative impact will be the insecurity of its citizens.

How are some of the causes being addressed?

The conflict has been addressed by a number of interested parties over a period of time with varying degrees of success. Key among those players has been the United Nations. As a follow up to the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement in July 1999 among the worrying parties (DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda, and Rwanda), the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1279 on 30 November 1999 which established the United Nations Organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in their words: "initially to plan for the observation of the ceasefire and disengagement of forces while maintaining liaison with all parties to the Ceasefire Agreement. Later in a series of resolutions, according to the United Nations, "the Security Council expanded the

mandate of MONUC to the supervision of the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and assigned multiple related additional tasks” (United Nations 2010).

While the warring forces disengaged, some of the MONUC objectives were not being achieved as desired; however, to a certain degree, some level of normalcy was established allowing the beginnings of a disarmament process that never lasted long. Richard Norman noted that: “It is far from surprising to see renewed violence in the Great Lakes region. While some action has been taken by the UN and the Congolese government to demobilize members of the FDLR . . . several thousand continue to raid and plunder the countryside, drawing reprisals from Tutsi militias, led for the last several years by General Laurent Nkunda (School of Human Rights Research Netherlands, 2008). Despite the MONUC weaknesses however, they have still progressed and transformed from a peacekeeping mission into a peace-support mission under Chapter VII, of the UN Security Council Resolution 1925 of 28 May 2010; establishing the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO). They still remain a big part of the solution through their efforts at intervention, disarmament and repatriation of combatants as appeared in *Africa Renewal* (Harsch 2009, 6).

Bilateral Operations between the DRC and Rwanda

The fact that at all times during the period described in this research Rwanda and the DRC have not seen eye-to-eye due to this conflict has also been observed. The relations have once soured to a point where one country accused the other of supporting each other’s rebels (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 230). The Rwandan side has been accused of supporting the RCD-Goma rebels as well as CNDP of Laurent Nkunda while the DRC is accused of supporting the FDLR. Still, during the last two years (2009 and 2010), both

countries have made a decision to come to the table and discuss bilaterally issues between them without a third party imposing terms in order to find lasting solutions to the conflict in the Kivus.

The positive results of these meetings have been reported in the *The New Times* of Rwanda: “With no doubt, the recent exchange of envoys between DRC and Rwanda coming after the two Heads of State meeting in the Congolese border town of Goma last August point to the fact that relations between the two countries are at their best” (*New Times* 2010). The two countries went ahead and agreed to conduct combined operations to hunt for the FDLR rebels in the Kivus. The first operation was code-named “Operation *UMOJA WETU*” (rightly so to mean “our unity”). The success of the operation may not have been in the number of FDLR captured since there were not that many, but in the fact that the two countries agreed to cooperate to conduct this operation on DRC soil with the intention of ridding the region of the main actors as viewed by Rwanda.

In a reciprocal move possibly geared to assuage the anger in the DRC, Rwanda arrested General Laurent Nkunda the dissident general at the center of the surge in Kivu fighting at the time when he was fleeing fierce fighting and put him under house arrest. (*The New Times*) *Africa Renewal* said something positive about this development:

They pledged to stop supporting armed groups in neighboring countries and allowing foreign insurgents to operate from their own territories. In that spirit, the Rwandan government decided in January 2009 to arrest Laurent Nkunda, head of a Congolese dissident faction that had previously enjoyed some support from Rwanda. “His intransigence had turned him into an obstacle to peace,” Rwandan President Paul Kagame explained. Following General Nkunda’s arrest, his group reached a peace agreement with the Congolese government. (*Africa Renewal* 2009)

This is an obvious step forward and it seems to be helping for both sides to engage at a higher level.

United Nations Diplomacy

The United Nations has not been limited to peace-enforcement methods in order to find a solution to the conflict. The medium of diplomacy and negotiation is also being explored. Hence the establishment of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Nigerian President. According to olusegunobasanjo.org,

The Secretary-General requested Special Envoy Obasanjo to assist the Governments of the sub-region to address the challenges to peace and security posed by the continued presence and activities of armed groups in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. He further asked him to explore with the Governments of the sub-region, and in particular the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda, ways to build confidence between them and enhance their bilateral relations. The Special Envoy will work closely with other international partners undertaking diplomatic initiatives on these issues (olusegunobasanjo.org n.d.).

The former President has been assisted by Benjamin Mkapa, a former President of Tanzania and the two were instrumental in convening Presidents Kagame and Kabila prior to joint operations “UMOJA WETU” and “KIMIA I” conducted against the FDLR and other armed groups in the Kivu region of the DRC. Since then, coupled with the fact that the two countries exchanged envoys in both their countries, the tone has been bilateral collaboration to fight a common enemy, leading to no more accusations of support to each other's proxy rebels. This effort further reinforced the trust between both countries' leadership where they each managed to visit the other's country in order to consolidate the gains so far achieved and chart a roadmap for total defeat of the armed groups in the region.

The Role of the International Community

The international community has always been looking at Rwanda with suspicion when it comes to this conflict. There is a strong accusation that Rwanda got involved in this conflict for economic reasons. That being a poor country, it was attracted by the exploitation of the DRC's minerals. Reyntjens, in the book *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Politics, 1996-2006*, used these words: For a poor country with an elite class that needed to maintain a lavish lifestyle, the exploitation of Congolese resources became an increasingly essential motivation (Reyntjens 2009, 280). This point is echoed by many other organizations including Human Rights Watch with its virulent attacks on Rwanda in relation to this accusation.

The accusations may or may not be warranted but they have cost Rwanda its reputation in the international community. They have in most cases shifted the focus of the international community on the conflict and tried to pin Rwanda because the latter constantly blames the international community for having failed it during the Genocide. Some members of the international community have taken a stance where they say that Rwanda is the aggressor.

How do the issues established affect Rwanda

In order to come to grips with the effects of this conflict in economic, political, and social terms, a quick assessment of what importance security and stability holds for Rwanda is paramount. For the last seventeen years, Rwanda has been grappling with the aftermath of a devastating Genocide that took place in 1994. A clear picture is of a destroyed economy, absence of government structures and the dangers of revenge killings as well as reprisal attacks from the defeated former government forces (ex-FAR). The

new government in place needed to clear away these physical and moral debris in order to re-align government structures, establish local and national governance institutes and put the country on a path of economic growth and development at the same time acknowledging that Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world. Rwanda is ranked 35th among the least developed countries of the world by the United Nations Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (United Nations-OHRLLS n.d.).

Because the country's natural resources cannot sustain all government expenditure, the burden falls on the people who get taxed. The tax base is small by all means because there are not that many enterprises to share the burden. External capital has to be enticed, and promises have to be made through all indications that the investors' holdings are safe and secure in the short and long-term. In order for the country to continue along the developmental charted roadmap named "Vision 2020," its current leadership has been emphasizing an atmosphere of security and stability in order to lure investors to come and invest their capital. The security talked of is not mere absence of chaos but a secure environment in which protection of persons and property from usurpers is paramount.

The University of California Education Abroad Program cites that "protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable are unstable government, civil war, or ongoing intense crime or violence, or frequent terrorist attacks" (University of California Education Abroad Program n.d.). All these indicators may be at play in the conflict in the Kivus and are at the core of this research as to whether Rwanda could

suffer from an overflow of these, or possibly from a direct by the armed groups which would cause such a situation again and again.

The country further earns a considerable sum of foreign currency in its tourism industry. Key among tourist areas is the famous Silverback mountain gorilla habitat in the Virunga Mountains. This area is spread along the borders with the DRC and Uganda. Unfortunately it is also a breeding ground for an insurgency and has been used before as an infiltration route into Rwanda by the FDLR. The FLDR presence in this region affects the area greatly since the fighters kill the animals for meals and make the area non-permissive for any visitors. A World Bank report had this to say about this developing industry and its relation to the violent past:

Rwanda is, however, also known for its violent past, which has dominated the image of the country for several years. The international perception of Rwanda, however, has changed and at present the country is considered one of the safest destinations in the region. This image change goes hand in hand with the marketing of the country and, in particular, the mountain gorillas. The revival of gorilla tourism demonstrates that with the right strategy and instruments, a post-conflict country can successfully focus on high-end tourism while maintaining conservation and contributing to poverty reduction through the involvement of communities as priorities (The World Bank n.d.).

Tourism is not the only industry at stake in this region. Rwanda also serves as the food basket for the neighboring towns of Goma and Bukavu in the DRC. What this means is that the conflict will upset the production as it has done before in 1997-2001. The income generation of the people will be on the downturn and Rwanda will be faced with unimaginable strain on sustaining its people, since it is one of the most densely populated countries in the region.

Summary

The Kivu region of the DRC is a conflict spot that has various ramifications for the DRC's neighbors in the east. The primordial issues of ethnic differences and anti-Rwandan sentiments in that region seem to be the nucleus of this brutal conflict. Land sharing and the fight over exploitation of natural resources also seem to be agents promoting this conflict, while the genocidal forces (FAR and *Interahamwe*), with their quest for a forceful return to Rwanda may yet be another of the motives for this conflict. Efforts have been made to reign in these forces of destruction with a considerable amount of success but there remains a lot to be done before Rwanda's fears can be allayed.

It may take a lot of optimism to believe that development and peace would prosper in this region because of the absence of some ethnic populations. Unfortunately, this may seem to be the erstwhile view of some belligerents. In the recent past, Rwanda has been accused of fuelling this conflict because of its alleged support to some Congolese (Rwandan origin) party to this conflict. These allegations aside, the threat to Rwanda posed by the escalation of this conflict may be alive.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conflict in the Eastern Provinces of the DRC has always been a cause of much concern within the DRC itself as well as among its neighbors and the entire international community. The issue however is not without controversy in the varied points of view even though most of the underlying causes are objectively agreed upon. This research set off to identify the origin of the causes of the conflict, the factors at play as well as the various actors in the conflict. It limited itself to the later stages of this conflict from 1994-to-date. It should be observed however that the various writers currently dealing with the subject converge on the suffering of the people affected by the conflict in the DRC but put no emphasis on the DRC's neighbors; notably Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, who are also affected by this war. It is one of these countries (Rwanda) that the research decided to address, as to whether the conflict affects Rwanda's security and stability.

A brief flashback into the history will set the stage for presentation of a summary of the findings already discussed in chapter four. The interpretation of the facts through the researcher's point of view established the implications that Rwanda is at risk of being destabilized by one group of the players in the conflict, namely the FDLR. Based on the observation and events indicating that the two countries have agreed to work on bettering their bilateral relations, the question remains, where does this leave the FDLR? The attempted response to this question shall be addressed in the recommendations.

Research has indicated that some of the troubles are traced back to the colonial era. The colonial master, King Leopold II of Belgium, used the British explorer Henry

Morton Stanley “to provide the empire-building record he needed to justify his claims to the territories and resources of the Congo basin in Central Africa (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 16). Once the king got a foothold in the Congo, there was no looking back. What he did with the Congo thereafter, however, is always under the microscope for having treated the Congo as his own personal property and handling the people so inhumanely that indelible scars were left in the hearts of the people even after the Congolese independence. Even when the Belgian state autocracy took over from the King Leopold reign, maximum and brutal exploitations continued. It is worth noting that the effects of the Belgian policies in that period were a pre-cursor to the subsequent problems that afflicted the Congolese people; from forced immigration of Rwandans, to the ethnic divides that still linger in that country, from poor governance issues to the economic under-development despite the immense wealth of that Central African nation.

Post-colonial governments did little to pacify and develop the Congo since they were busy fighting their own antagonisms and rivalries. The Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba, Presidents Kasavubu and Moise Tshombe era was almost a lost decade. Worse still, when Mobutu came to the scene, he fuelled the dividing factors by engaging in “regional” politics which played on the whims of the people; where they came from in terms of region and ethnic or tribal orientation. President Mobutu has been considered a product of the Cold War protagonists (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 143). His perpetuation of regionalism, nepotism and kleptocracy took the DRC to a level where the inhabitants of the eastern part of the DRC were almost led to believe that they were not considered part of the Kinshasa-led apparatus because of the geographical disconnect between the region and central government. The east was only connected to the capital Kinshasa by an

airport in Goma, and there were no viable roads and railways; both were defunct. The neglect and discontent slowly metamorphosed into a war where Laurent Desire Kabila appeared on the scene from his exile in Tanzania in the late 1990s to lead a war that broke out in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide, leading to the ousting in 1997 of Mobutu Sese Seko, the strong man of Zaire.

As previously stated, many authors refer to this depreciation of the Congo and the breakout of conflict as a result of state decay and its instruments deeply rooted in the colonial and post-colonial leadership (Nzongola-Ntalaja 2002, 214). True as it may be, this breakdown of governance is not the only cauldron of this conflict in comparison to the deep-rooted hatreds that characterize this landscape. Yet nobody is willing to accept this notion and unless the people grow beyond ethnic interests and look at national unity and regional goals, this conflict is here to stay, its effects spilling over to Rwanda.

Conclusions

During the conduct of this research, the author identified divisions based in ethnicity, the struggle for land and natural resources, the making of warlords and dissident officers from the previous liberation wars, and the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide as having exacerbated the conflict to its current proportions. The issues mentioned above are wholly intertwined in their dynamics to influence the direction of this conflict. What comes to the fore is that since these matters involve Rwanda or Rwandans in more than one way, the propensity of the conflict has lasting effects and Rwanda's security and stability is inevitable; hence, the answer to the research question: "Failure to end the Kivu conflict: is Rwanda's security and stability at stake?"

The first conclusion is that the threat posed by the armed group FDLR to Rwanda is a reality. However the implications are that it has decreased in proportion when compared to the previous seven years. The FDLR has been bogged down into resource exploitation for survival as a few of them get repatriated to Rwanda intermittently. They are subsequently processed in “Solidarity Camps” for re-education under the auspices of the Rwandan Demobilization and Resettlement Commission (RDRC) where they are processed as ‘normal citizens’ and sent with a resettlement package to their homes.

The second conclusion is that the threat has been lessened by the fact that Rwanda and the DRC have of late engaged into combined operations to hunt for these armed groups. The worry is that the operations do not completely neutralize the threat because of their limited success, but they put pressure on the groups in order to force them to accept the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, and resettlement (DDRR) process run by the UN, the World Bank, RDRC, and their partners.

The third conclusion is that the group’s threat has further been lessened by the international community’s role in arresting and bringing to trial of their leaders Ignace Murwanashyaka and his deputy Straton Musoni in Germany. This leads to a weakening in their efforts to coordinate their activities outside the area of operation. It limits them for some time, but like the hydra, another head might come up or a sympathizing group may co-opt them to form yet another stronger group. An example is COL Musare who has been linked to the Rally for Unity and Democracy (RUD), a Rwandan opposition party (ICG 2007, 15).

In the final analysis, data and current trends point to the fact that the threat to Rwanda is real but it is not as big as it was in previous years before the current initiatives

undertaken by the DRC and Rwanda to pacify the region by themselves. Coupled with the international community's role of bringing to justice the perpetrators of the conflict and prosecuting their leaders, and by so doing denying them international support, the most active armed group (FDLR) may slowly be eliminated. It will however need a collective effort of all concerned parties and the full realization that Rwanda is not the aggressor but instead the victim of the conflict as much as the DRC is.

Recommendations for Action

A first recommendation is for the Government of the DRC to step up the democratic process that puts into place the right governance mechanisms covering the whole country; most especially when integrating the Eastern Provinces into the mainstream politics of development. Having been neglected for a long time, the Kivu region should be able to “feel” that it is part of the Congo. This will help to re-establish control over the large ungoverned lands over which the armed groups have much control. The DRC must ensure that its security forces have total control over these large swathes of land that harbor armed groups.

A second recommendation is establishment of civil society forum where ethnic divisions and national identities are addressed in hopes of reconciling the warring tribes. The same forum should address the issue of land where the mapping of private and public properties is made in such a way as to ensure equitable distribution. Sensitization campaigns on these key subjects should be made to include representatives drawn from the religious leaders, opinion leaders, regional military commanders and former militia commanders. At end-state, dialogue should be established and unity and reconciliation

fostered among the Congolese peoples of North and South Kivu. This should conveniently serve as a microcosm of the greater Congo.

A third recommendation is related to the first in that it emphasizes security forces control over the Eastern Provinces; continuation of combined operations based on sufficient intelligence with Rwanda in order to eliminate these armed groups. If possible, the Burundian government should also be involved in order to deny these armed groups any asylum.

Fourthly, the process of disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, and resettlement, supported by the UN and World Bank should be sustained and reinforced to encompass not only the FDLR but also the Congolese armed groups with incentives to encourage them to take up normal life as unarmed citizens. It should work well in conjunction with the first two recommendations. There are considerable results to show in Rwanda and they should be consolidated.

A fifth recommendation is that the international community should take the example of Germany to prosecute the perpetrators of the conflict. This way the armed groups shall be weakened by being denied any support from Europe or America or elsewhere. Leadership of these groups especially the FDLR should be sought and brought to justice. This will go hand-in-hand with arms embargoes and sanctions against countries that supply these groups with weapons.

A final and sixth recommendation is related to the issue of “blood minerals” that help fund these armed groups should be isolated and protected. Measures that encourage certification of minerals in order to eliminate those from conflict areas should be established and enforced by the international community, but most especially the DRC’s

neighbors. This measure would be intended to deny the armed groups the necessary resources to procure logistics and other sustenance as well as discouraging the illegal trade of these commodities which attract these groups to the areas in conflict.

Recommendations for Further Study

A few unanswered questions that may be subject to further research came up including the failure to understand the rationale behind the post-colonial rulers in the Great Lakes region having failed to address and settle once and for all the issue of nationality and citizenship. But the most outstanding issue that seems to have no end in sight is the issue of ethnicity in the Great Lakes region. Why it becomes such a big matter that warrants massacres and becomes a subject of armed conflict beats common sense. That people should not accept their diversity and work for more transcendental goals like unity and development baffled this researcher and calls for a dissecting research to come to the nucleus of this issue.

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